

The Early Years Foundation Stage Policy for Stoke Park Primary and Nursery

Introduction:

The aim of the Early Years Policy is to provide a framework for our Early Years curriculum and promote good practice.

At Stoke Park Primary and Nursery, when evaluating **the quality of education**, we consider three different aspects, which are:

the **curriculum framework** (sets out intent), the **delivery and teaching** of the curriculum (implementation of the curriculum framework) and the **impact of the taught curriculum** (how the combined effect of the planned curriculum and teaching impacts on pupil outcomes).

The Early Years Curriculum Framework and Intent:

At Stoke Park Primary we aim to embrace young children's learning through curiosity and play, as we believe that, for the children in our community, there are no limits on what they can achieve in their lives when they build upon a strong foundation of inspired teaching and a strong home-school partnership. We use highly skilled practitioners who recognise the many different ways in which adults can help young children learn; this includes the use of quality interactions, observing and noticing children's interests and responding in a variety of ways. Our intent is that whilst following the EYFS Framework we will provide a wide range of both discretely planned and child-initiated activities and opportunities for learning through play. We aim to nurture knowledge, creativity, kindness, wisdom, critical thinking, empathy and many more of the skills and values that will allow young children to develop and flourish as learners. We also believe that through this approach children can discover their own unique interests and talents and to develop these to a high standard.

We recognise that to meet the Early Learning Goals and achieve a good level of development some aspects of knowledge need to be automated and fluent to support and enable later learning; such as Phonics and Number.

Therefore, our teachers use their professional expert knowledge to through the use of discrete, responsive and enrichment planning, teach the children both disciplinary and substantive knowledge. Our intent is to also provide frequent opportunities for the children to re-visit these key areas both through adult led activities and play.

Therefore, we will strive to provide, through the quality teaching and delivery of the EYFS curriculum and by embedding the Characteristics of Effective Learning, a learning environment where our children have the very best learning experiences, opportunities and interactions that:

– Inspire them to learn the skills, knowledge and understanding they need to have highly successful, fulfilled childhoods and future adult lives

– Help them to become children who build trusting friendships; are strong in spirit (and are resilient); make wise personal choices; and have strength of character

– Provides the opportunity to be part of a thriving community that enriches childhood, celebrates success and encourages children to believe in their own potential.

We are determined to enable our children to achieve their very best outcomes and therefore our teachers will use their expert knowledge of the children to assess what the children know, monitor and make judgements on their progress, and use this information to plan next steps, taking into account the child's interests and disposition to learning. At Stoke Park Primary we are committed to enabling all children to have the very best start to their educational journey in line with our school values:

Be kind, Be proud, Strive to succeed.

Teaching and curriculum delivery (implementation):

- The curriculum the children experience is determined not only by the intentions set out above but how those intentions are delivered. The objectives from the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile are skilfully translated into discrete teaching and sequences of learning that are delivered to pupils. Through the enhanced provision plan and responsive planning, all staff are also able to effectively respond to children's interests and provide a good balance of continuous provision and adult-planned activities. This enables children to choose from a range of activities which provide challenge and the opportunity to practise and embed play, skills and knowledge throughout the different areas of learning. Teaching connects new knowledge to existing knowledge across sequences of learning and within lessons, through communicating and modelling (particularly language), showing, explaining, demonstrating, exploring ideas, encouraging, questioning, recalling, providing a narrative for what the children are doing, facilitating and setting new challenges.
- The areas of the curriculum that are taught discretely are: Phonics, Literacy, Numeracy, Gymnastics, Drama and Dance (Ballet), other aspects of the curriculum such as Knowledge and Understanding of the World and PSED may at times also be taught discretely. However, the attention given to the equipment and resources provided within the learning environment allow children to access continuous provision with free-flow between Nursery and Reception, which benefits both cohorts of children and develops school readiness well. We believe this supports a culture of high expectations for children and families from a very early age.
- Sensory and schema play is supported throughout the learning environment, both inside and outside, with for example, sand, water and sensory resources. Challenges are added for hand-eye coordination and fine motor skills such as through the 'funky finger challenge'. The outside provision also includes space for large loose parts play which supports problem solving as well as balance

strength and co-ordination. Using responsive planning and the enhanced provision plan staff augment the provision daily with resources that meet the children's interests, this enables them to explore and learn further through their natural curiosity.

- The children's well-being and sense of belonging is supported by having a variety of work and photos displayed, including their own 'work' and mark-making efforts, as well as 'finished' work. We also provide a 'Soft Start' which is a key tool in supporting children and families. The school day begins at 8.30 am where parents and carers are welcomed into the classroom together with children and start the day with a range of planned activities or free-play to choose from. The soft start is instrumental in building good relationships and is also a chance for teachers and staff to model reading to children, positive learning interactions and activities for home. The positive and welcoming atmosphere promotes enthusiasm and fosters conversations for learning. The soft-start approach is rooted in evidence and research that shows that it is the adult interaction and the to-and-fro of conversation that builds language skills (Skolnick Weiseberg et al 2013, Yogman et al 2018).
- Oral as well as written feedback is given to the children on how to persevere, build resilience and improve. Opportunities are continuously given for pupils to reflect and act on that advice. This on-going process of observation (through Tapestry), quality interaction and assessment acts as a significant driver for the EYFS curriculum implementation. This cycle allows staff to carefully monitor progress, plan next steps, whilst taking account of interests and the Characteristics of Effective Learning.
- The sequencing of the delivery of teaching, specific teaching strategies and assessment promote the long term memorisation and fluent use of key knowledge, concepts and skills (set out in the EYFS framework). There is a clear structure and routine that establishes clear expectations for both learning and behaviour.

In both year groups we integrate long term planning, which ensures continuity and progression throughout Nursery and Reception. Medium term planning (half termly) helps us link the essential skills to be developed to specific planned activities and identifies assessment opportunities, which in turn supports the individual child to move forward in their learning. Short term (weekly) planning includes specific plans for coverage of the daily Literacy, Mathematics, handwriting and phonics whole class teaching sessions, where learning objectives will be shared verbally with the children. Adult led focus activities are also planned to develop and move children forward in all areas of their learning, again small targets are verbally shared to support progression in each child's individual learning experience. Free-flow activities are planned on a daily basis with the whole team to include opportunities for extension; child requested activities and further planned adult led activities.

Prime Areas

We believe that the prime areas of learning (Personal, emotional and social development; Communication and Language and Physical development) are the base stone for all future learning and therefore place a lot of emphasis on ensuring that all children feel, happy, secure and settled into the school environment. During the first term, we begin the child's first experience of nursery or Reception by focusing the topic around them and their families; enabling them to engage in a subject they know the most about. We want all children to

become confident, active and independent learners, enabling them to enter Key stage one with the skills that they need to continue their journey of learning.

Specific Areas

There are four specific areas of learning (Literacy, Mathematics, Knowledge of the world, Expressive Arts and design) which supplement the prime areas and allow children to become confident active learners when the prime areas of learning have been supported and applied. Through these areas, we believe children can further develop their knowledge of the world around them and develop an understanding of all future learning that awaits them. Here children will continue to become effective learners and develop the dispositions to learning through being curious, resourceful, persistent and courageous. These areas of learning are the basis for main whole class teaching sessions, as well as the independent and adult led learning opportunities available, with the prime areas at the forefront of all teaching and learning.

Literacy

This area of learning supports the development of linking sounds to letters and understanding that from this we can read and write. Children will begin to recognise print in their environment and start to understand that this is one way of communicating with one another. It is vital that children understand that print carries meaning and that they are able to engage with this essential element of communication and the high importance it holds. We actively promote the importance of reading and writing which is done through stories, songs, poems, mark making and writing in a variety of different contexts and for different purposes using a wide range of media. Throughout all classes there is a book corner and areas that promote active mark making and writing. Both Nursery and Reception classes have a phonics area, which the children are encouraged to use to support their independent learning. We teach phonics on a daily basis and use Letters and Sounds as our programme of study to ensure progression.

Mathematics

This area of learning provides opportunities for children to develop their understanding of number, measurement, pattern, shape and space by providing a broad range of contexts in which they can explore, enjoy, learn, practise and talk about numbers and shapes. It encourages children to understand and respond to the symbols that represent numbers and what this means in real contexts. It supports children in understanding what an important role shapes and numbers play in our everyday lives and how they develop our own understanding and help us to solve problems. We teach Mathematics based on features of Singapore Maths. The principles are based on

a concrete – pictorial – abstract – cycle of learning. There are many reasons that this approach develops understanding so well, but one key factor is its step-by-step approach that can be used at home or in the classroom.

The 7 areas of learning are then broken down into development areas, which culminate in the Early Learning Goals at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The Early Learning Goals help the foundation stage team to plan the learning environment, activities and experiences and provide a framework for teaching within the Early Years foundation stage. The Foundation Stage Curriculum provides a structure of learning opportunities through which we develop the different aspects of early education. These areas cover the basic skills necessary for Key Stage 1 of the National Curriculum. We believe our creative and topic based curriculum helps children meet learning opportunities within a happy, secure and interesting environment through practical activity, enquiry and purposeful play, with consolidation through practice, talk and reflection.

Underpinning the whole curriculum framework is the recognition of the importance of **reflective practitioners**, the values they hold and place upon the characteristics of effective learning – *how* children learn. As stated within the statutory EYFS (DfE, 2017:10) -

1.9. In planning and guiding children’s activities, practitioners must reflect on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in their practice.

Three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are:

- ***Playing and exploring - children investigate and experience things, and ‘have a go’***
- ***Active learning - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements***
- ***Creating and thinking critically - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things***

These **characteristics of effective learning** compliment the **prime areas** (Personal, emotional and social development; Communication and Language and Physical development).

Impact of the curriculum:

At Stoke Park we are working towards the children achieving most aspects of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum by the end of the foundation stage. We are working with all our feeder nurseries as well as our own Nursery to identify the children’s developing knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes to learning, using the development areas. Once the children enter Reception we use this prior knowledge to continue to identify and track the children’s progress through the Foundation Stage. We work closely with Key Stage 1 to continue the children’s development through the Foundation Stage and on to the National Curriculum. We aim to make the transition from

the Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1 as smooth as possible, by sharing information gathered within the foundation stage and continuing the learning for the children as individuals.

Parental Involvement and Community links:

In the Early Years phase at Stoke Park Primary School and Nursery, we believe the parents and carers to be co-educators of the children and as such we respect the learning both inside and outside of the school environment. We value the parents and carers as co-educators of the children and we aim to foster these parental links in a variety of ways. We operate an open door policy in Early Years and operate a 'soft start' each morning where parents and carers are welcomed into the classroom to partake in activities with their children, as such parents have the daily opportunity to discuss any questions they may have with the class teachers and the Early Years staff. We also use Tapestry as an online Learning Journal and we actively encourage parents/carers to be involved and participate with this. We also encourage parents and carers to become actively involved in their child's education through holding special events or curriculum days each term and sending regular story books home for the parents to use with their children.

Equal Opportunities, Inclusion and Special Education Needs:

We believe that all children have a right to a full and inclusive education and as such we aim to deliver a curriculum that is accessible to all children irrespective of their ethnic, race and cultural heritage. (see equal opportunities and inclusion policies)

We aim to set a challenging curriculum that enhances the learning of children with special educational needs and enriches the learning of gifted and talented children. (see SEND and gifted and talented policies)

Admissions:

Please see our Nursery and School Admissions policies